

## **Therapists Aren't Trained with Books Alone**

VISN 1 MIRECC researchers have shown that drug abuse therapists need either web-based training or hands-on supervision to learn a new behavioral treatment, cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT). In a study comparing different training methods, experienced substance abuse clinicians were taught CBT with one of three strategies: (1) assigned readings alone, (2) computer-assisted interactive training or (3) participation in a 3-day workshop and follow-up supervision. Therapists made few changes with readings alone but improved significantly with computer-assisted training and even more with hands-on supervision. CBT is one of over 100 types of psychotherapy shown to work in research clinics. Based on the idea that mental illness is based on maladaptive thoughts and habits, CBT attempts to uncover dysfunctional thoughts and systematically train patients to adapt healthier attitudes and coping strategies. This study is part of a larger effort to translate results of clinical research into everyday practice. Most psychotherapists use a variety of techniques and do not base their work on treatment manuals such as those used in research projects. While research has repeatedly shown that psychotherapy works, use of techniques with demonstrated efficacy may make it work better. The current research project was designed to determine how much training is needed to enable community therapists to use one of these effective new treatments. While it is encouraging that community therapists can learn new methods, it takes more than readings to change therapists' behavior. The promise of computer-assisted is an important finding because such training packages can be disseminated far more efficiently and inexpensively than hands on training workshops and supervision. Yale researcher, Diane Sholomskas, led the study group that included MIRECC researchers Kathleen Carroll and Bruce Rounsaville and Yale researchers Gia Syracuse-Sewart, Samuel Ball and Kathryn Nuro.